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SUBJECT: SUDAN CONTACT GROUP AGREES TO FOCUS ON SECURITY

1.(SBU) Summary. The Sudan Contact Group (SCG) during a February 7 meeting discussed the Assessment and Evaluation Commission's (AEC) staffing needs and agreed to push for confirmation of new AEC Chair Derek Plumbly. The group also agreed to lobby for a session on the Darfur political track during or adjoining the upcoming Sudan Consortium conference.

The group decided to document specific Sudanese actions impeding UNAMID deployment to prepare for possible UNSC sanctions. The group concurred that members should push China to pressure Khartoum to cooperate with UNAMID. Group members also agreed to continue to address UNAMID's transport, logistics, and helicopter needs.

12. (SBU) Continue Summary. UN Special Envoy for Darfur Jan Eliasson said that security in Sudan needed to improve before serious political talks could begin. He also called for regional engagement and said that an international observers meeting would be held in March. The SCG told Eliasson it supported AU/UN leadership of the Darfur political process and accepted that formal talks would not be imminent. The group encouraged engagement on multiple tracks, including continuing to work with the rebel factions, building security from the ground up, and focusing on civil society. End Summary.

FOCUS ON ENABLING THE AEC

13. (SBU) The Sudan Contact Group (SCG) met on February 7 at USUN for six hours. In attendance were delegations from the US, UK, EU, France, Canada, Norway, and the Netherlands, as well as UN Special Envoy for Darfur Jan Eliasson. The SCG agreed to place a high priority on enabling the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) to fulfill its mission of monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and conducting a mid-term evaluation of unity arrangements established under the CPA. Members agreed to lobby for Sir Derek Plumbly to be accepted as AEC chair by the end of February. The UK, US, and Norwegian delegations agreed to draft 4-5 key objectives for the AEC and to circulate the draft to the group for review. UK Special Representative for Sudan Michael O'Neill highlighted the AEC's staffing shortages, specifically in economic positions, and asked members for personnel contributions.

14. (SBU) SCG members agreed that Sudan's elections were not likely to take place in July 2009 as scheduled in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Although members agreed to lobby for timely elections, several members cautioned that

Sudanese parties perceived the elections as driven by the international community's interests and therefore were not committed to the timeline. Members also were concerned about pushing for on-time elections because of the post-election violence in Kenya, as well as the belief that the National Congress Party (NCP) would not allow elections unless it was assured of winning.

¶5. (SBU) Members agreed to press GOS for progress on the technical aspects of election preparation including implementing the census (and educating citizens about it), passing the electoral law, and establishing a national electoral commission. Members also highlighted the need to address public perceptions if the election is delayed. AF/SPG D/Dir Jason Small called for \$6M to be released from the EU/Danish AID for census development issues.

¶6. (SBU) Members agreed to use the upcoming Sudan Consortium meeting to highlight Darfur political issues and planned to hold a preparatory meeting in 4-5 weeks with the UN and the World Bank. (NOTE: The Sudan Consortium consists of officials from Sudan, UN, World Bank, IMF, international donors, and civil society who meet to examine the progress of the CPA and the challenges facing implementation. END NOTE.) Members agreed to lobby to include discussions of Darfur at the Consortium or at a meeting prior to or following the Consortium.

¶7. (SBU) Members discussed proposing an expansion of the UNMIS mandate to cover the Kordofan regions during discussions of the mandate's renewal in March, but did not reach final agreement.

REMOVING OBSTACLES TO UNAMID DEPLOYMENT

¶8. (SBU) Members noted that many small issues were delaying

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UNAMID deployment, making it difficult to pressure Khartoum into compliance. Members agreed to document specifics of Sudanese actions impeding UNAMID deployment to give the UNSC a stronger basis for action should it decide to pursue sanctions. Members agreed that successful UNSC action would require pressuring China to use its leverage with Khartoum to secure rapid deployment.

¶9. (SBU) UK and US Milads highlighted UNAMID's need for helicopters, heavy transport, and logistics support, but noted that the volatile security situation discouraged nations from making pledges to UNAMID. The US stressed the importance of transport and multi-role logistics units, which should not be overshadowed by the need for helicopters. Members also noted that soon-to-be-deployed African troops need training and equipment assistance in preparing for the mission.

BRIEFING FROM JAN ELIASSON

¶10. (SBU) UN Special Envoy for Darfur Jan Eliasson argued that security needs to be improved before political progress would be possible. He highlighted the negative impact on Sudan of regional crises in Kenya and Chad and said that there will be no peace in Sudan without regional cooperation. He plans to schedule an international observers meeting in March. Eliasson recommended securing a cessation of hostilities agreement and using workshops as a springboard to launch formal talks. He said rebels would have to form a representative group of critical mass before moving forward with formal meetings.

¶11. (SBU) Eliasson said that he and AU envoy Salim Ahmed Salim had agreed on a list of candidates to be the UN/AU joint mediator and are working to have their top candidate accepted by the UN Secretary General and AU President.

¶12. (SBU) Eliasson called for the international community to begin planning for early recovery so that development activities could start immediately after normalization.

DARFUR POLITICAL PROCESS

¶13. (SBU) Members informed Eliasson of their support for UN/AU leadership of the Darfur political process, and suggested the process move on three tracks: 1) continuing engagement with rebel factions and the Government of Sudan, including holding issue-focused workshops to avoid disagreements on leadership issues and leaving the door open for Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) unification efforts; 2) building security from the ground up, including implementing confidence-building steps and involving rebel leaders with UNAMID; and 3) engaging with civil society, linked with the UN's communication strategies. The UK Special Representative called for involving Arabs in the process and embedding the Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST) into UNAMID. Members agreed with Eliasson that there was no possibility for political negotiations until security improves.

¶14. (U) AF/SPG cleared this message.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

EU: Torben Brylle (EU Special Representative for Sudan), Steen Hansen

Canada: Suehila Elkateb (Special Envoy for Sudan), Mark Richardson (Political Officer)

France: Helen Le Gal (Assistant Director at Africa desk)

Netherlands: Ed Craanen (FM Special Representative for Africa, Bartjan Wegter (Africa Expert)

Norway: Kjell Hodnebo (Special Representative for Sudan), Berit Enge (Political Affairs Minister Counsellor), Bengt Holmen (Military Adviser), Elin Eikeland (Assistant Counselor)

UK: Michael O'Neill (Special Representative for Sudan)

UN: Jan Eliasson (UN Special Envoy for Darfur)

SPG: Jason Small, Kemi Yai, Marti Flacks

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USUN: USUN Political Counselor, political officers, and MSC.
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